CHAPTER 6

PHOWA CAUSATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

6.0 Introduction

As Comrie (1989) notes, research on causative constructions has played a significant role in recent linguistic development. This is partly due to the fact that causative constructions demand an analysis of the interaction between syntax and semantics. Causatives, as Comrie explains, involve two 'micro-situations' combining to form one complex 'macro-situation' in a cause and effect relationship (1989:165). In the sentence, 'The smoking sailboat shocked Sally,' for example, two smaller events (i.e., the sailboat's smoking and Sally's shock) combine to form one unified event—the former resulting in the latter.

Since a mere analysis of English causatives, leaves many unanswered questions, RRG looks to languages worldwide in order to craft its causative theories. Presupposing the need for a holistic interaction between syntax and semantics in order to adequately explain grammar, causative constructions coordinate well with the whole of RRG theory, and causative predicate classes emerge directly from the six basic verb classes—doubling their number by giving each type a causative corollary. This chapter will briefly analyze Phowa causative constructions through the RRG framework already in place. The chapter will be primarily concerned with the *semantics* of Phowa causative constructions, but will also consider syntactic behavior.

6.1 Phowa Causatives

Sun Hongkai (1999) demonstrates that TB languages represent causation using three different methods: agglutinative, inflectional, and analytic. Phowa makes use of two of these three methods—employing inflectional morphological causatives and analytic syntactic causative constructions. In Section 2.4, it will be remembered, the topic of an early Tibeto-Burman morphological causative

process was introduced. This ancient process can still be observed in some devoiced Tibeto-Burman consonant initials. In Matisoff's words, "There is much evidence that the Tibeto-Burman languages once had a highly developed morphological process of forming causatives from simplex verbs by the addition of a prefix *s" (1982:243). Traces of this morphological process are most often found in voiced simplex and devoiced causative pairs in TB languages, and several—including Matisoff (1975, 1976, 1982), Chen (1990), Björverud (1998), and Sun (1999)—have described the remnants of this morphological process in various TB languages. Phowa also retains evidence of such morphological causatives. Some Phowa morphemes that demonstrate traces of this devoicing morphology are listed in the following table:

Simplex		Causative	
gī	to do (work)	*kǐ*	cause (to do)
dʎ́	gulp; (of birds) eat	*tō*	feed animals
dʑî	snap.in.two	*tɕhì*	stretch[20]
gû	return (go back)	*khū*	return (give back)
dī	slice	*thī*	sharp
dʐ̩ɔ̄	to be (EXIST)	*ʈʂhɔ̂*	to birth (a child)

Table 31. Remnants of Phowa Morphological Causative-Simplex Pairs

Although consistent tonal patterns are difficult to establish in these pairs, voiced-devoiced and—more dominantly—voiced-aspirated patterns are clearly present. Some of these morphological causatives still retain an overtly causative function. For others the relationships have simply become analogous to causation.

The causative marker *kǐ* listed in the first row of Table 31 is both an inflectional morphological causative and an analytic syntactic causative. Other analytic causative markers include *kî* and *ʈʂhî*. Note their different usages in the sentences below:

[20] an alternate possibility for this pair is *tɕhî* 'untie.'

(6.1)

a. *kê ŋâ sỳ dzỹ* ***kî*** *ɮâ*
3S 1S firewood chop CAUSE PART

'He had me chop firewood.'

b. *ŋâākô ŋâ* ***ʈʂhî*** *ɮī kâ tə́ nī tàh*
Agao 1S CAUSE DIR.toward DEM location sit DIR.down

'Agao made me sit down over there.'

c. *ŋââmî ā kīzà* ***ʈʂhî*** *nɛ̄ ʔv̂* ***kî***
Ami TOP child CAUSE DCM cry CAUSE

'Ami caused the baby to cry.'

d. *ŋââphâ* ***ʈʂhî*** *nɛ̄ kê sī*
Apha CAUSE DCM 3S know

'Apha made him understand.'

e. *ŋâ* ***kǐ*** *nɛ̄ kê nīʈʂhù*
3S CAUSE DCM 1S angry

'I made him angry.'

Regarding syntactic behavior, *kî* is a verb final causative while *ʈʂhî* and *kǐ* are used to coordinate other clauses and phrases. Causative markers *ʈʂhî* and *kǐ* may be used with the dependent clause marker *nɛ̄* to mark dependent causative clauses containing actor arguments. While much research remains to be carried out on the full range of semantic distinctions implied by these three causative markers, it has at least been determined that causative *ʈʂhî* may only be used with an animate undergoer.

Besides agglutinative, morphological, and analytic causatives, a fourth possible class of causation in TB not discussed by Sun (1999) is a class that may be termed 'lexicalized' causatives. Certain verbs actually encode causative semantics. If a verb is able to pass the causative paraphrase test presented in 5.1.7, the lexical decomposition of that verb must include causation, and that verb may be said to be a lexicalized causative.

6.2 Lexical Decomposition of Phowa Causatives

When one predicate causes another predicate, a set of lexical decompositions are brought together by the operator 'CAUSE' in RRG lexical representation. The English sentence used in the introduction of this chapter, 'The smoking sailboat shocked Sally,' for example would be rendered:

[**do′** (sailboat, [**smoke′** (sailboat)])] CAUSE [INGR **shocked′** (Sally)]

In this sentence the first logical structure—an Activity—causes the second logical structure—an Achievement, thus making this a Causative Achievement construction. Had the predicate 'smoke' been left out of this sentence, i.e., 'The sailboat shocked Sally,' an unspecified action would have been the cause of Sally's shock. Unspecified actions are represented with the zero marker 'Ø' in RRG lexical decomposition.

Using both analytic and lexicalized causatives, this section will offer a brief look at the lexical decompositions of Phowa causative classes corresponding with the four of the six basic predicate classes established in Chapter 5.

6.2.1 Causative States

In the sentence below, an Activity predicates interacts with a State predicate:

(6.2)

ɲjuǔʂhūpū	*kâ*	*mà*	*kǐ*	*nɛ̄*	*ŋâ*	*dʐū*	*χəh*
bull	DPT	CLF	CAUSE	DCM	1S	afraid	INTF

'That bull really scares me.'

This sentence may be lexically decomposed as follows:

[**do′** (*that bull*, Ø)] CAUSE [**afraid′** (*me*)]

While the sentence implies that there is something about the bull's behavior that causes fear, the zero marker 'Ø' indicates that the quality is not specified in the sentence itself.

6.2.2 Causative Achievements

As was demonstrated in Chapter 5, the Phowa verb *ʤ̨î* 'snap.in.two' is an Achievement predicate. Note the sentence below:

(6.3)

ʈ̣ī ŋâ jí kɨ̌ nɛ̄ ʤ̨î à
rope 1S PASS CAUSE DCM snap.in.two PERF

'The rope was snapped in two by me.

[**do′** (*I*, Ø)] CAUSE [INGR **snap.in.two′** (*rope*)]

Thus, in this example, an unspecified Activity predicate causes an Achievement predicate.

6.2.3 Causative Accomplishments

Verbal concatenation can also produce causative semantics in Phowa. In the following example, two non-causative predicates—an Activity and a State predicate interact in a concatenation that both effects causative semantics and produces an Accomplishment predicate. The concatenation first transforms the Activity predicate into an Active Accomplishment, by introducing telicity into a non-telic activity, and then transforms the State predicate into an Accomplishment:

(6.4)

kɛ̂ ʣàh bǒ à
3S eat full PERF

'He has eaten his fill.'

The lexical decomposition of this predicate is given below:

[**do′** (*he*, [**eat′** (*he*, Ø)])] & INGR **eaten′** (Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **full′** (*him*)]

Another such causative concatenation yielding Accomplishment semantics is illustrated in (5.20b) of section 5.2.2 above: *ʧ̌ɨ̌ ʈ̣shī* 'to break in two by splitting.'

While all of the examples of Phowa causative constructions given thus far have been instances of analytic syntactic causatives, some Phowa predicates do not need to use syntactic strategies for constructing causative relationships simply because they lexicalize causality inherently. In the sentence below, the lexicalized causative Activity predicate *thē* causes an Accomplishment predicate:

(6.5)

kɛ̂	*vêtshè*	*thē*	*īʤà*	*ɬô*
3S	pig-lard	use.for	food	fry

'He uses lard to fry the food' / 'He cooks using lard.'

This sentence can be lexically decomposed into the following logical structure:

[**do′** (*he*, [**use′** (*he*, *pig lard*)])] CAUSE [BECOME **fried′** (*food*)]

6.2.4 Causative Activities

In the following sentence the Achievement *ʤî* 'snap in two,' causes an Activity *phʌ̂ dŭ tī* 'run (out) away:'

(6.6)

ʦī	*ʤî*	*à*	*nɛ̄*	*ɮāmù*	*phʌ̂*	*dŭ*	*tī*	*à*
rope	snap.in.two	PERF	DCM	donkey	run	DIR.out	go	PERF

'The rope snapped in two letting the donkey run away.'

The logical structure of the sentence may be rendered:

[INGR **snap.in.two′** (*rope*)] LET [**do′** (*mule*, [**run.away′** (*mule*)])]

While the rope's snapping does not 'cause' the donkey to run away in a literal sense, a causative relationship is still present. Even without a causative marker in the syntax of this construction (unlike the English free translation), the dependent clause marking particle *nɛ̄* establishes the first clause as independent and thus links the event occurring in the following clause to itself in a subordinate relationship. As has been shown in the sentences listed in example (3.22), every

known instance of the DCM *nɛ̄* marks a dependent or subordinate clause. While each of the two clauses in (6.6) are independent on their own, *nɛ̄* functions to make the second clause dependent on the first—if not in an overt causative relationship, then at least in a 'permissive' relationship. The semantic presence of a permissive causative is likely since this sentence was elicited using the Mandarin permissive causative, '让 *ràng*.' RRG represents such permissive causatives with a 'LET' operator instead of CAUSE (Van Valin forthcoming:36).

6.3 Summary

Taking a brief look at Phowa causatives, this chapter has made several important distinctions. First of all, Phowa causatives may be of three types: morphological, analytic, and lexicalized. Morphological causatives have almost transitioned out of use in Phowa, but evidence still exists proving the causative nature of devoicing/aspiration of consonant initials in some predicates. Analytic causatives are the most prevalent causative class in Phowa and may be manifest in concatenations, clause chaining, and/or overt causative markers such as *kî*, *ʦhî* and *kǐ*. Lexicalized Phowa causatives, on the other hand, are able to produce causative relationships simply because of their semantic content.

Through the examples given in this chapter, four out of the six Causative predicate classes posited by RRG have been illustrated in Phowa using analytic and lexicalized causatives. Further research is sure to demonstrate the existence of Causative Semelfactives and Causative Active Accomplishments as well.